

Congress responded favorably to Dr. Gallaudet's suggestion. In April, 1864, an act authorizing the Board of Directors of the Institution, "to grant and confer such degrees in the liberal arts and sciences as are usually granted and conferred in colleges" was, after considerable discussion, passed without a dissenting voice in either branch of Congress. Congress showed its further approval of the new departure within the next few years by making a considerable increase in its annual grants for support, by appropriating large sums for the purchase of additional grounds and the erection of new buildings, and by providing that a limited number of students might be admitted to the collegiate department from the several States and Territories free of charge. The number of students thus admitted free was at first ten; the number has been increased by acts of Congress from time to time until now it is one hundred and forty-five.

The College was publicly inaugurated June 28, 1864, under the name of the National Deaf-Mute College, and Dr. Gallaudet at the same time was inaugurated as its president. He continued to hold the office until September, 1910. The College began its teaching work in September, 1864, with seven students and one professor besides Dr. Gallaudet.

In 1887, in response to an earnest appeal from women for an equal share with men in the advantages of higher education, the doors of the College were opened to young women.

In 1891, a Normal Department for the training of hearing teachers of the Deaf was established with the double purpose of raising the standard of teachers in American schools for the Deaf and of affording the deaf students of the College increased opportunities for practice in speech-reading. Out of the one hundred eighty-one graduates of the Normal Department, 87 later became executives of American schools for the Deaf, 32 of whom are still in office today.

In 1894, in accordance with a petition from the graduates of the College, its name was changed to Gallaudet College in honor of Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, the founder of the instruction of the deaf in America, a beautiful bronze statue of whom had been placed in the College grounds by the deaf people of America in 1889.

The Courses of instruction and study are given in the arts and sciences. The system of instruction includes the recitation of assigned subjects; discussions and lectures; work in laboratories and with instruments; courses of reading directed by members of the Faculty, and practice in English composition.

The entire curriculum, including a Preparatory year, embraces a period of five years, each of which is divided into three terms.

Special pains are taken to preserve and improve, by suitable and frequent oral exercises, whatever powers of speech and ability to read the lips are possessed by students on entering College.